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Ministry of Education

CLASSROOM RESOURCES TO FOCUS ON 2008 INDIGENOUS GAMES

VICTORIA – The Province is investing \$500,000 in new classroom resources that profile Aboriginal people in B.C. in preparation for the 2008 North American Indigenous Games, Education Minister Shirley Bond announced today.

“These lesson plans and classroom activities celebrate Aboriginal people and events that have helped shape our province,” said Bond. “Students will learn about our Aboriginal heritage, our rich cultural diversity, our shared history and our many achievements. They will also help to celebrate the North American Indigenous Games coming to our province next summer.”

The resources include features on the North American Indigenous Games and will provide educators with lesson plans, theme units and multimedia materials that help integrate Aboriginal content into the existing B.C. curriculum. The resources will be available on a website, and teachers will be able to contribute their own resources to the site. The website is being used in classrooms today and continues to develop as educators add resources.

“The North American Indigenous Games in 2008 will provide us with a great opportunity to learn about and celebrate Aboriginal people in North America,” said Michael de Jong, Minister of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation. “With this resource, students can learn about successful Aboriginal role models and develop a broader understanding of the significant contributions Aboriginal people have made throughout our province.”

The Cowichan Valley will host the North American Indigenous Games Aug. 3 – 10, 2008. Up to 6,000 athletes will compete in 16 sports. In addition, there will be 3,000 cultural performers and a need for more than 2,500 volunteers.

“As the host society for the Cowichan 2008 North American Indigenous Games, we are pleased to see the launch of the Aboriginal Curriculum Integration Project,” said Rick Brant, CEO of the 2008 North American Indigenous Games. “We believe that this initiative will raise awareness of the upcoming Games and work to reinforce the spirit of community collaboration, a core value of the North American Indigenous Games movement.”

The Cowichan Valley school district’s Aboriginal programs department is working with districts to develop the classroom resources, which includes a 30-minute animated video. The video tells the story of how and why, for centuries, Aboriginal people have gathered around the province. Stories are told through characters interacting with animated Elders that are based on actual First Nations Elders. The 2008 North American Indigenous Games will be featured as an upcoming gathering. The characters were developed by Simon James, a First Nations storyteller and creator of Raven Tales.

“The Aboriginal Curriculum Integration Project, spearheaded in School District 79, has developed multimedia resources to help teachers across the province integrate Aboriginal content into their learning activities and at the same time has raised awareness of the Cowichan 2008 North American Indigenous Games,” said Brian Simmons, chair of the Cowichan Valley board of education, a funding partner in the games. “The district is pleased to have received this grant, knowing it will continue to create great opportunities for all students in the province to learn more about

Aboriginal teachings, knowledge and culture, as well as the unifying factor of the North American Indigenous Games.”

These resources support the Province’s Pacific Leadership Agenda to build new relationships with First Nations, and to close gaps in health, housing, education and economic opportunities, and are one component of the Province’s strategy to improve Aboriginal student achievement. Others include the new First Nations Education Act and Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreements.

The Province is investing an estimated \$51.1 million a year – \$1,014 per student – for Aboriginal education in 2007-08. The funds are used to support Aboriginal language and culture programs, Aboriginal support service programs, and other localized Aboriginal education programs.

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Media Lara Perzoff
contact: Public Affairs Bureau
 Ministry of Education
 250 356-5963
 250 920-9040 (cell)

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